

[Translation]

Guidelines regarding Debt Relief to Small Farmers

1786. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD:
Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the guidelines issued by the Union Government to States to waive of a part of loan given to small farmers and to waive of non-institutional loans given to landless labourers and poor farmers during the last three years;

(b) the details of the facilities provided to the districts in each State in this regard;

(c) whether any monitoring has been done as to the implementation of the guidelines issued by the Union Government; and

(d) if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) to (d). The Hon'ble Member is perhaps referring to the Agricultural and Rural Debt Relief (ARDR) Scheme, 1990 formulated by the Government of India for extending debt relief to the eligible farmers, landless labours, rural artisans and weavers who had borrowed from public sector banks, Regional Rural Banks. On the advice of the Central Government, State Governments had also formulated their schemes on the lines of the Government of India's Scheme for the benefit of the borrowers in cooperative sector. The ARDR Scheme became effective from May 15, 1990. The Scheme covered all overdues of eligible borrowers as on October 2, 1989 including short term as well as term loans upto Rs. 10,000/- per borrower. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) issued suitable

guidelines to banks for smooth and expeditious implementation of the Scheme. The Scheme came to a close on March 31, 1991 in all the States except for Jammu & Kashmir and Assam where it was closed from June 30, 1991. As per the reports received from the NABARD, who monitored the implementation of the Scheme by RRBs and Cooperatives and from the Public Sector Banks as on February 24, 1992 a total number of 315 lakh beneficiaries have been extended debit relief to the extent of Rs. 7714 crores all over the country.

[English]

Declaration of Andaman and Nicobar Islands as Free Port

1787. DR. ASIM BALA:
SHRI MANORANJAN
BHAKTA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to declare Andaman and Nicobar islands as a free port zone;

(b) whether any Committee was set up by the Government in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the recommendations made by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d). Government have set up an Advisory Committee to examine *inter alia* the desirability and the feasibility of setting up a Free Port in India, recommend a suitable location and suggest an appropriate policy regime therefor. The Report of the Committee is awaited.